Choose a question that we’ve discussed or a question that is generally related to what we’ve discussed. In principle, this should be a question that philosophically interests you the most.

Questions to choose ANY 1

(1) is beauty subjective or objective?

(2) what is the relationship between art and irrationality?

 (3) how does art affect our society? These are questions that we covered in class. But of course you can choose your own questions like:

1) what makes something an artwork? (

2) How do we distinguish good art from bad art? (3) Can art be ugly?

Example: “Is beauty subjective or objective?”

(2) Present your answer to this question.

Example: “Beauty is subjective.”

(3) Explain what your answer means in detail. In the case where your answer states “beauty is subjective,” for example, you are supposed to explain thoroughly what it means to say that beauty is subjective. In explaining what your answer means, you may also want to illustrate the philosophical implications of your answer (e.g., “given that beauty is subjective, beauty cannot be found in the objects themselves.”) Be sure to clarify all the philosophical jargon in your answer and your explanation thereof.

Example: “to say that beauty is subjective is roughly to say that beauty is ‘in’ the subjects rather than the objects (note: the subjects refer to human beings as the observers of art, and the objects refers to the works of art). More specifically, it means beauty is determined by something in the subjects: the feeling of pleasure. Philosophically, the subjectivity of beauty implies that beauty is not an observer-independent property such as the volume of the objects. Further, it implies that the experience of beauty is impossible when one is not in the presence of the objects” (this is an incomplete explanation. But I hope it can show what an adequate explanation looks like).

(4) Present three reasonable objections to your answer. To satisfy the Information Literacy requirement, at least one objection must be from external sources, that is, publications not covered in class (e.g., peer-reviewed articles, Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy [https://plato.stanford.edu/], monographs). And be sure to cite the publications you make use of properly. And you must spell out the objections clearly (e.g., what exactly does this objection consist in?). Don’t leave anything in the objections unexplained.

Example: “one objection to the subjectivity of beauty is that if beauty were subjective, then there would not be any aesthetic disagreement, because ‘X is beautiful’ and ‘X is not beautiful’ are both reports on our attitudes toward X, which are intrinsically compatible” (Reid’s objection).

(5) Defend your answer by responding to these three objections. You must demonstrate why these three objections are false or problematic. You must also provide some helpful examples when you refute these objections. Be sure to explain how your responses really refute those three objections. Don’t assume your readers are familiar with philosophy. Make sure your responses are concise and to the point.